ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Generally, when enhancing the sharpness of a digital image by an edge enhancement process, it is desirable to adjust the range of edge enhancement. For example, when photographing a building or man-made object, the image appears to have an added border when the line of the contour of the building is thickened, such that the image appears unnatural. Accordingly, it is desirable to enhance the line by narrowing the edge enhancement range so as to not thicken the line in the case of buildings and the like. Conversely, when enhancing an edge by thinning the edge in the case of a human image and the like, the enhancement often produces the opposite effect of making the eyes and the like appear unnatural. For this reason it is desirable to smoothly enhance the edge by broadening the width of the edge in the case of human images. In the image processing apparatus of the present invention, the edge enhancement range is determined by calculation using a weighting matrix selected in accordance with the presence/absence of an edge on whichever of the sides of a target pixel. Specifically, data of a target pixel and the surrounding pixels are calculated using a weighting matrix selected by a weighting selection means, and the edge enhancement range is determined by comparing this

calculated value to a specific threshold value. The data of pixels within the enhancement range determined in this way are subjected to the edge enhancement process.